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The War in Spain

BY CHARLES A. THOMSON

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THE sweeping success of General Francisco Franco and his forces in their offensive through Aragon and into Catalonia brought final victory almost within their grasp. They reached the sea on April 15, thus splitting Loyalist Spain into two parts. Should they prove able to carry forward the conquest of Catalonia and capture Barcelona, the fall of Madrid is not likely to be long delayed. It is thus opportune at this time to review the military conflict, and analyze the factors which have made possible continuing victories for the Nationalists. A discussion of the political forces influencing the contest on both sides may also aid in assessing the probable consequences of the struggle.¹

During the first six months of the war, from July through December 1936, the Insurgents overran half of the peninsula. They easily mastered all northern Spain—from Galicia on the west to Aragon on the east—with the exception of the Asturias and the Basque provinces fronting on the Bay of Biscay. In the south General Franco's Moors, Foreign Legion, and regulars, aided by Italian and German airplanes, crossed from Spanish Morocco, swept through Andalusia and Badajoz, made contact with the northern troops of General Emilio Mola, raised the long siege of Toledo, and reached the gates of Madrid early in November.

The raw and untrained militia levies, which were the government's chief reliance as a result of the army's almost complete defection, succeeded in stopping General Mola's advance in the Guadarrama mountains, but were rolled back before Franco's victorious march until the Loyalist capital was threatened. Then, strengthened by the International Brigade as well as by Russian aircraft and munitions, they made a stand and saved Madrid from capture.²⁻³

1. A projected issue of *Foreign Policy Reports* will treat economic and social trends in both parts of Spain during the conflict.

2-3. For background of the Spanish conflict and the first six months of the struggle, cf. Charles A. Thomson, "Spain: Issues Behind the Conflict," and "Spain: Civil War," *Foreign Policy Reports*, January 1 and 15, 1937. For international phases of

Since January 1937 the military struggle can be divided into four periods. During the first three months of the year Franco's energies were concentrated on repeated attacks against Madrid, all unsuccessful; although a secondary offensive in the south brought the fall of Málaga. The second phase, from April until the latter part of October, witnessed the Insurgent conquest of the Asturias and the Basque provinces. Following a two months' lull, the third period opened on December 15 with the battle of Teruel. The fourth period witnessed the successful Insurgent offensive which began in March 1938 on the Aragon front.

FRANCO STOPPED AT MADRID

The capture of Madrid would probably have brought General Franco immediate and decisive victory; and he did not abandon his attempts to take the city until he had been turned back five times. Following attacks in November, December and January, General Franco launched on February 6 his fourth offensive, this time to the southwest of the former capital, in a drive to cut the all-important road connecting Madrid with Valencia. He struck along the Jarama river and made a substantial advance. The Insurgents were stopped short of the road, but their artillery commanded it; and the government was forced to abandon its use at that point and detour traffic.

The Insurgents' fifth drive against Madrid resulted in the 15-day battle of Brihuega, on the Guadalajara front northeast of the capital. On March 8 two Italian divisions, comprising 10,000-15,000 men⁴ and well-equipped with trucks, tanks and artillery, drove south from Almadrones along the Madrid-Saragossa highway. Their plan was apparently to take Guadalajara, and then push on

the contest, cf. Vera Micheles Dean, "European Diplomacy in the Spanish Crisis," and John C. deWilde, "The Struggle Over Spain," *Foreign Policy Reports*, December 1, 1936 and April 1, 1937.

4. Two other Italian divisions were held in reserve. Most of these troops were apparently Blackshirts.

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to Alcalá de Henares, whose capture would mean the practical encirclement of Madrid. The offensive achieved a maximum advance of 20 miles. But on the 11th a violent rain and sleet storm mired down the Italians' motorized advance. With the 12th the storm cleared, and the government air force went into action, heavily bombing and machine-gunning the Italian lines. The attacking troops were forced back, and soon were fleeing in disorder. By the 22nd the battle was over, and the government forces had regained practically all the ground previously lost.⁵⁻⁶ The failure to coordinate the Guadalajara offensive with the earlier Insurgent attack along the Jarama river was interpreted by some observers as indicating rivalry and possible dissension between Franco and the Italian generals. Had these drives been launched simultaneously, the Loyalist lines might have folded up before the double attack, and Madrid been captured.

Meanwhile, the government had made definite progress in forging a unified and disciplined army from the popular militias improvised when the people seized arms to battle the army revolt. During the July and August days each trade-union organization or political party had organized its own militia unit. But these makeshift forces were short of munitions and supplies, especially aircraft and artillery. "The militias possessed no organization, little discipline outside of small units, no cohesion and no central command."⁷ Competent staff work was absent, or at best defective. Rivalries and partisan bickering weakened the line of battle and often left many contingents without essential transport, food and munitions.

To the Communists must go the major credit for the introduction of order and unity in this nondescript army. As early as July 1936 the Communist party started organization of what was called the Fifth Regiment. It was not another "political" column, for it included men drawn from all Popular Front parties. Its soldiers were given training and discipline before being rushed to the front. Its units were characterized by uniform organization. Designed originally to number only 1,000 men, it had grown to 115,000 by the middle of October 1936.

But the Communists were not content with creation and control of the Fifth Regiment. They pressed at the same time for establishment of a

regular army under a single command. On October 19, 1936 the government decreed the militarization of the militias, 'demanding the end of the volunteer system and the imposition of effective discipline. But the ends sought by the law were only achieved after some delay.

The system of political commissars which had grown up with the militia was taken over into the new army. To the commissar was assigned responsibility for welfare and morale. He founded schools, provided recreational facilities, gave attention to securing specially needed supplies. In addition, and possibly more important, he was a propaganda agent, charged with maintaining fighting spirit and loyalty to the republican government among both officers and soldiers. By June 1937 the organization included 650 commissars and 4,000 company delegates.⁸

INSURGENTS CONQUER NORTHERN PROVINCES

During the spring, summer and early fall of 1937, the Insurgents centered their efforts on a campaign to conquer the Basques and Asturians in their isolated northern provinces. The offensive opened against Bilbao on March 31. The regional government⁹ had been handicapped in accumulating reserves of foodstuffs and military supplies by both the non-intervention restrictions and the Franco blockade, which Britain for a time tacitly recognized.¹⁰ The defending troops numbered some 70,000, compared with approximately 35,000 men in the attacking forces. But German and Italian planes gave the Nationalists an overwhelming superiority in aircraft,¹¹ which made it possible to bomb and machine-gun not only the opposing troops but also the defenseless villages of the countryside. The destruction on April 26 of the "holy city" of Guernica by Insurgent planes was particularly ruthless,¹² and brought forth a wide-

8. Cf. Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Comisariado General de Guerra, Obra en Marcha* (Valencia, June 1937).

9. On October 1, 1936 the Basque provinces had been granted a statute of autonomy by the Cortes.

10. For a revealing discussion of London's curious policy in this incident, cf. G. L. Steer, *The Tree of Gernika* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), pp. 189-209. The author was the representative of *The Times* (London). This book presents the most complete account of events on the Basque side during the northern campaign.

11. At the start of the campaign, the Insurgents were aided by about 100 German and Italian planes. In contrast, the Basques could muster only six Russian fighting planes and seven slow and antique bombers. They also lacked anti-aircraft guns. In artillery the Insurgents were estimated to be twice as strong as the Basques. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 157, 158.

12. According to correspondents who talked with survivors at Guernica a few hours after the disaster, the town was systematically bombed with explosive and incendiary projectiles, following which fighting planes machine-gunned the fleeing

5-6. Cf. Herbert L. Matthews, *Two Wars and More to Come* (New York, Carrick & Evans, 1938). Chapters XIX and XX present a detailed account of the battle and of Italian participation.

7. Ralph Bates, "Castilian Drama," *New Republic*, October 20, 27, 1937. These articles present the most revealing account in English of the development of the Loyalist army.

spread international protest. Bilbao fell on June 19 and a number of Italians were among the first troops to enter the city. This victory gave the Insurgents possession of an important industrial center, and augmented their economic resources by control of valuable coal and iron mines whose products could be used in purchasing war supplies from Germany and Italy.¹³

Partly as a result of the Loyalists' July offensive near Madrid, the northern campaign suffered a two-months lull, and only in mid-August did the Nationalists resume their advance, this time against Santander. Approximately half of their forces were Italians, organized in two divisions—the Black Flames and the Twentieth of March—and mixed with Spaniards in the Black Arrows.¹⁴ Santander succumbed on August 25, and two days later Franco and Mussolini exchanged congratulatory messages on the rôle played by Italian Legionnaires. Mussolini declared: "I am especially happy that the Italian Legionnaires have given, during the last ten days' battle, a powerful contribution to the splendid victory of Santander."¹⁵

The final stage of the struggle proved to be the march on the Asturian seaport of Gijón, which was captured on October 21. The long siege of Oviedo, in which the Loyalists' dynamite-throwing miners had taken a large part, was raised at the same time. In contrast with the widely publicized rôle played by the Italians at Santander, Spanish troops alone were reported to have effected the capture of Gijón.¹⁶ Thus ended the conquest

of the northern provinces, which eliminated a serious threat to the Insurgent rear, and released a considerable body of their troops for service on other fronts.¹⁷

The Basques' expectations of aid from Valencia had been disappointed by the Loyalist government, which succeeded in sending them only limited assistance and a small number of airplanes. Considerable indirect aid, however, had been derived from the offensives launched by the Loyalists on other fronts. There had been an unsuccessful push in the Casa de Campo April 9-12. But the major government effort in this period was exerted at Brunete, west of Madrid, in a battle lasting from July 6 to 28. The Loyalist army in a well-coordinated drive, pushed back the Insurgents approximately 10 miles and captured three strategic villages—Brunete, Villanueva de la Cañada and Villanueva del Pardillo. The Nationalists then counter-attacked strongly, and forced the government troops out of Brunete. Although this drive was robbed of decisive results by lack of reserves, it compelled General Franco to exhaust much of his own reserves in men and munitions, and may have prevented an offensive on his part. Transfer of the government capital from Valencia to Barcelona was carried through on October 30.

FOREIGN AID TO FRANCO

General Franco had added control of the sea to his superiority on land and in the air. At the start of the war, the naval strength of the two factions had been approximately equal, with the government holding superiority in power of ships, but the Insurgents boasting a more than compensating advantage in the support of the great majority of the officers. The Insurgents early secured mastery of the Straits of Gibraltar and of the Bay of Biscay coast on the north. But they suffered a severe loss on April 30, 1937, with the sinking near Santander of their only battleship, the *España*.¹⁸ The Loyalist vessels largely avoided open conflict, rendering their chief service in conveying supply ships through the Mediterranean.

During the summer of 1937 the Insurgent

populace. Cf. Steer, *The Tree of Gernika*, cited, pp. 234-45; also the *Morning Post* and *Daily Express* (London), April 28, 29 and May 1. Insurgent supporters, some of whom admit the bombing, declare the town was fired by retreating Loyalist troops. Cf. H. G. Cardozo, *The March of a Nation* (New York, McBride, 1937), pp. 280-83; and Arnold Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal* (New York, Sheed & Ward, 1937), pp. 230-33. Earlier, on March 31 and succeeding days, the Germans had subjected the civilian population of Durango to the same sort of terroristic bombing. Two Catholic churches filled with morning worshippers were struck, as was also the chapel of Santa Susana, where 14 nuns were killed. The total number of deaths was estimated at 250. Steer, *The Tree of Gernika*, cited, pp. 160-68.

13. On July 17 General Franco signed a compensation agreement with Germany. But Great Britain continued to receive the great bulk of iron ore shipments from Bilbao. Of 419,683 tons exported October 1937-January 1938, Britain received 245,946 tons and Germany only 74,054 tons. *New York Times*, April 2, 1938.

14. *New York Times*, August 26, 1937. Italian casualties in this campaign were announced in Rome as 16 officers killed and 60 wounded, and 325 soldiers killed and 1,616 wounded. Matthews, *Two Wars and More to Come*, cited, p. 300.

15. The complete text of the messages is given in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, September 3, 1937.

16. Reports of friction between Spanish, Italian and German troops gave this fact some significance. On October 14, moreover, it was announced in Rome that General Bastico, Commander-in-Chief of Italian forces in Spain, and General Terruzi, chief inspector of the Blackshirt Legions, had been permanently recalled.

17. The Insurgents had a maximum of 50,000 to 75,000 soldiers engaged in the latter part of this campaign. The fact that the absence of these troops from the main theatre of war prevented any other offensive on the part of Franco illustrates his severe shortage of effectives.

18. Contrary to early reports that an airplane bomb had been responsible for this loss, later accounts declared that the ship had foundered after striking a mine. The Loyalist battleship, *Jaime I*, was damaged by explosion at Cartagena in June 1937. Previously some of its large guns had been dismantled and taken to Madrid. For a brief review of the activities of the Nationalist navy, cf. *Spain* (2 East 34 Street, New York, N. Y.), December 15, 1937.

"blockade"¹⁹ was made more effective by "pirate" submarines loaned, according to general belief, by Italy. The Insurgents' air base on Majorca, from which fleets of Italian bombers operated, added materially to their naval strength. Previously it had been reported that German and Italian naval vessels were supplying the Insurgents with information on the movements of Loyalist ships and other services.²⁰

Franco's revolt might have been defeated almost at the outset if it had not been for foreign airplanes and artillery. These armaments, together with Italian troops, had played a predominant rôle in the conquest of the northern provinces.²¹ But in the winter of 1937-1938 this assistance was to become even more open and decisive. General Franco had succeeded in augmenting his forces with new Spanish levies, so that his troops totaled approximately 450,000. What he needed to obtain from abroad was not men but *matériel*. He required vast stocks of airplanes, artillery, munitions and motorized equipment if the stalemate in the field were to be broken; and these supplies were forthcoming.²²

NATIONALISTS GAIN TERUEL AND ARAGON

The two-month lull on land following the cap-

19. Franco had announced a blockade of government ports first in October 1936, and again in November 1937.

20. *New York Times*, April 27, 1937; and Steer, *The Tree of Gernika*, cited, pp. 88, 89, 105-109. Notable among Insurgent successes against merchant vessels were the capture on March 10, 1937 of the *Mar Cantábrico*, loaded with several million dollars' worth of munitions and equipment from the United States and Mexico; and the sinking of the *Komsomol* in December 1936, and the *Ciudad de Barcelona* in May 1937, the former carrying approximately 115 airplanes and hundreds of parts, and the latter 80 new American airplane motors. Matthews, *Two Wars and More to Come*, cited, Chapter XVII. The Italian journal, *Mediterraneo*, in its issue for December 1937, claimed for Italy the "glory" of having shot down 355 Loyalist planes during a nine-month period. Cf. a Rome dispatch in the *New York Times*, December 7, 1937.

21. One leading military critic writes: "Since the autumn of 1936 he [General Franco] has been increasingly dependent on foreign resources, in far greater measure than his opponents." Liddell Hart, "Lessons in the Spanish War," *Army Ordnance* (Washington), January-February 1938. Cf. also *The Times*, February 19, 1938. The total number of Italian "volunteers" in Spain has been variously stated, from the figure of 40,000 admitted by Italy to estimates of 60,000, 80,000 and more by certain observers in the country; the number of Germans, serving principally as technicians, flyers and artillerymen, is usually put at 8,000 to 10,000. The strength of the Loyalist International Brigade is commonly estimated at 15,000, although some statements have placed it at a top figure of 35,000. Cf. *New York Times*, March 14 and July 18, 1937; and Matthews, *Two Wars and More to Come*, cited, Chapter XVII.

22. Cf. the article by Edward J. Neil, correspondent in Insurgent Spain, *New York Herald Tribune*, December 7, 1937; and *ibid.*, March 30, 1938. The Loyalist Ministry of National Defense issued on March 2, 14, 28, 31 and April 16 detailed statements listing the alleged German and Italian aid received by the Insurgents. It was charged that the latter had come into possession of 700 warplanes.

ture of Gijón was broken on December 15, when the Loyalists seized the initiative by an attack on the mountain city of Teruel, situated at the spearhead of the Nationalists' most threatening salient. Only after six days of hard combat did they enter the outskirts of the city. Some 2,000 troops and civilians held out in the Seminary, Bank of Spain and other buildings for a time. But these groups finally surrendered on January 7.

Meanwhile the Insurgents, calling off their projected offensive at Guadalajara, had rushed to the scene an army reported to number 150,000, initiating a counter-offensive on December 28. It was backed by an impressive artillery concentration and an imposing fleet of warplanes, estimated by some observers at 400. The Government forces were not only barred from their objective—the Teruel-Cuenca highway, along which troops might have been transferred between the Aragon front and Madrid—but the heights dominating Teruel itself were gradually recaptured, and on February 22 the city fell into their hands. This Nationalist victory in the two-month-long battle dealt a heavy blow to Loyalist prestige. Its effect was offset to some degree by the torpedoing on March 6 of the *Baleares*, one of the two strongest remaining vessels in the Insurgent fleet, during a battle with Government warships off Cartagena. Following the naval encounter, Nationalist ships were bombed by Loyalist planes.

On March 9 General Franco launched a new and sweeping offensive along 60 miles of the Aragon front, south of Saragossa. The Nationalists' motorized columns broke through and advanced with surprising rapidity. On March 17, Caspé, headquarters of the Loyalist Aragon army, was captured. The Insurgents then shifted their attack to the north, opening on March 22 a drive toward Lérida, viewed as the key to Catalonia. After stubborn resistance, the city fell on April 3.

These gains were won by tactics hitherto not used in the Spanish struggle. The Nationalists attacked on a wide front, overwhelming the defenders with airplane bombing and concentrated artillery barrages comparable in intensity with those of the World War. Through holes thus pierced in the Loyalist lines, Franco pushed forward his tanks and trucks. The retreating soldiers were strafed by hundreds of war planes. In an attempt to counter Insurgent superiority in *matériel*, Premier Negrín flew to Paris on March 15 to plead fruitlessly for airplanes and munitions.

BARCELONA BOMBED

Accompanying the Aragon offensive, the Insurgents loosed a campaign of the most pitiless

bombing of civilian masses yet seen in the war, directed principally against Barcelona and other coastal cities. Earlier, on January 19 and 30, hundreds of casualties had resulted from air attacks on these centers.²³ A French proposal of February 1, which won British support, sought to pledge both Spanish factions against air bombardment of civilian populations. The Loyalist authorities welcomed the move; in fact, Minister of Defense Indalecio Prieto had offered on January 28 to cease reprisals in the form of bombing "towns in the remote rearguard" if General Franco would stop his air raids.²⁴ But on February 6 Nationalist leaders at Salamanca declared that bombings of Barcelona would continue unless all war industries were removed from the Loyalist capital. As an alternative, they proposed evacuation of the city's million inhabitants by an international commission.²⁵

Barcelona was bombed again on March 5, but the heaviest series of attacks opened on the night of the 16th. Between that time and the afternoon of the 18th, the city was subjected to 18 raids, often at intervals of two or three hours. The bombers, flying at an altitude of 12,000 to 20,000 feet, too high for accurate marksmanship on military objectives, dropped their missiles on all parts of the city, residential as well as business.²⁶ The Plaza Catalunya and central boulevards were pockmarked with huge craters from 1,000-pound bombs. Hotels, apartment houses, cafés, the University of Barcelona and numerous homes were hit. At least 1,000 persons were reported killed, and double the number injured. Other coastal towns suffered severely. It was argued by some that these attacks had a deliberately terrorist purpose, to break down the morale of the civilian population. Insurgent supporters, however, declared that Barcelona contained 180 military objectives, including arsenals, depots of gasoline and other supplies, arms factories, railway stations and docks, and that attacks were directed against these points.²⁷

23. Following the bombing of Lérida by the Insurgents on November 2, when 225 persons including 50 children were listed as killed, the Loyalists initiated a policy of reprisals—Salamanca, Seville and Valladolid being bombed between January 21 and 26.

24. *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona), January 29, 1938.

25. On February 27 the Febus News Agency (Loyalist) announced that since the opening of the civil war, Insurgent air and naval attacks on 28 cities and towns in Catalonia had killed 1,542 persons and wounded 1,979. There had been a total of 212 air raids, in which 5,024 bombs were dropped. Three hundred and sixty-one buildings were destroyed, and 1,495 damaged. *New York Herald Tribune*, February 28, 1938.

26. Cf. Herbert L. Matthews, "When Planes Rain Death on a Big City," *New York Times Magazine*, March 27, 1938; and *The Times*, April 7, 1938.

Meanwhile, the Insurgents had resumed their pressure on the southern front. On April 2 the forces under General García Valino, including three Italian divisions, broke through and captured the strategic point of Gandesa, 25 miles from the Mediterranean. But a new Loyalist stand near Cherta barred them from Tortosa on the coastal highway. A drive southwest toward Viñaroz brought them the capture of this Mediterranean port on April 15, and the attackers later extended their control over 40 miles of coast line. Premier Negrín deputized General Miaja at Madrid to assume direction of all Loyalist Spain outside of Catalonia. In the north the Nationalist troops found advance easier, and on April 7 captured Catalonia's largest hydroelectric station at Tremp, supplying about 60 per cent of the current used in the region.

These Nationalist successes spurred the Loyalists to redoubled efforts. The Catalans were stung to even greater activity by a Franco decree, published on April 6, which abrogated the region's autonomy statute. Calls were issued for 100,000 volunteers. General Sabastián Pozas was removed from command of Catalanian defense. On April 4 a new and stronger cabinet was formed under Premier Negrín, in which both trade-union federations—the UGT and CNT—were represented. Although an appeal to Britain and France on April 5 for the ending of "non-intervention" and freedom to purchase arms met with rebuff, a substantial quantity of airplanes was received a few days later, presumably from the Soviet Union.

POLITICAL DISCORD WEAKENS LOYALISTS

Behind the military conflict in Spain, a political struggle has been underway, which has not only influenced the course of the armed contest, but is likely to become an important factor when the guns have been silenced. This struggle is more many-sided and complex than the military conflict. For within each of the warring factions, significant political differences underlie the surface unity achieved for the purpose of winning the civil war.²⁸

Political rivalry and discord have more openly handicapped the Loyalists than their opponents. On the Government side, the most important political developments have been: (1) the rise of the Communist party; (2) the working alliance

27. On March 30 Mussolini declared that air warfare was intended to "fracture the morale of the people." *New York Times*, March 31, 1938. For support of the Insurgent contention, cf. "The Bombing of Barcelona," *Spain*, cited, April 1, 1938.

28. For a brief review of the diverse groupings supporting both Loyalists and Nationalists, cf. Thomson, "Spain: Issues Behind the Conflict," cited.

effected by the Communists with the Right-wing Socialists and the Republican parties; (3) the success of this relatively conservative coalition in a struggle successively against the anti-Stalinite POUM, the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Left-wing or Largo Caballero Socialists; and (4) the decline of Communist influence and its later resurgence in the cabinet formed on April 4, 1938.

At the outset of the revolt, the new power of the working masses found political expression in local committees which sprang up in village, town and city, and which for a time exercised more effective authority over defense and civil administration than did the central governments at Madrid and Barcelona. But this "double régime" proved incapable of organizing adequate resistance to the advancing Insurgents.²⁹

When Franco's troops approached Madrid early in November 1936, a new and decisive foreign influence appeared on the scene. Russian aid had arrived—not only airplanes and tanks, but also advisers, technicians and the forces of the International Brigade, in many instances recruited by Communist agencies. Thanks in great part to Soviet influence, the Spanish revolution was not destined—as has so often been the case in history—to pass from the hands of moderates to those of extremists. Instead, the Communists cast their weight against radical trends; they proclaimed that the purpose of the war was not to advance social revolution, but to defend a legal and democratic government.

The Spanish Communists must be credited with significant achievements. They led in transforming the militia into a disciplined army, and encouraged a unified command. They worked to unify and strengthen the central government as against the local committees. They put a check on wholesale socialization of industry and collectivization of agriculture. They sought to substitute discipline under centralized authority for the spontaneous and disorderly enthusiasm of the masses. They demanded that the social revolution be definitely subordinated to the task of winning the war.

The Communists, whose numbers had not exceeded 50,000 prior to the revolt, derived power to enforce these policies from various factors. First, of course, was aid from the Soviet Union. A second factor was superior organizing ability, shown by their success in marshaling support both within the army and behind the lines. The Communists won the allegiance of General Miaja and many other officers, largely controlled the commissar

system and the censorship, and were particularly strong in the Madrid forces and in the aviation corps. In the third place, the Communists skillfully exploited a policy of moderation toward socialization of industry and agriculture, which gained the support of numerous middle-class elements, notably small business men and the richer peasants. In consequence their numbers showed a marked increase, being estimated at 220,000 in January 1937, and 400,000 in September of the same year. But the party paid for its growth by a change in its social character. It attracted adherents not so much among the industrial proletariat, as among peasants, rural laborers and middle-class elements.³⁰ The effective influence of the party, moreover, extended beyond its own membership. It succeeded in permeating other organizations, notably the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC)³¹ and the Unified Socialist Youth, claiming 300,000 members.

The aims of the Communists largely coincided with those of the Republican parties and of the "reformist" or Right-wing Socialists under Indalecio Prieto and Juan Negrín. But their purposes were distinctly at variance with those of the anti-Stalinite POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*), the Anarcho-Syndicalists, and to a lesser degree the Left-wing Socialists under Francisco Largo Caballero. All of these latter groups favored drastic social revolution, with enhancement of proletarian influence over that of the bourgeoisie.

The Anarcho-Syndicalists had demanded that the social revolution be carried forward. They proclaimed that "the war and the revolution are indivisible." They were a turbulent and undisciplined force and lacked a consistent political policy.³² In Catalonia particularly, their National Confederation of Labor (CNT) had taken over many factories and other enterprises. The Anarcho-Syndicalists had led in attempts to realize collectivization of land and farms.

These radical proletarians took issue on several counts with the program advocated by the Communists, Socialists and Left Republicans. The lat-

30. H. N. Brailsford, in "Impressions of Spain," *The New Republic*, June 9, 1937, gives the following figures on membership in the Communist party exclusive of Catalonia: "89,000 industrial workers as against 62,000 agricultural workers, 76,000 peasant owners, 15,000 'middle class' and 7,000 'intellectuals,' together with 19,000 women."

31. Cf. Thomson, "Spain: Issues Behind the Conflict," cited, p. 249. This group affiliated with the Third International.

32. For an illuminating discussion on the significance of anarcho-syndicalism in Spain, cf. Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit*, cited, pp. 14-24, 33-38. *Apuntes de Solidaridad Obrera, Proceso Histórico de la Revolución Española* (Barcelona, Ediciones C.R.T., 1937 [?]) presents a series of articles from the leading Anarcho-Syndicalist daily.

29. For a detailed review of these developments, cf. F. Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (London, Faber & Faber, 1937), pp. 281-85.

ter groups, demanded the inclusion of the CNT and FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) militias within the regular army and under a unified command.³³ They urged the dissolution of the Workers Patrols which had sprung up during the revolutionary days of July 1936, and their replacement by a "non-political" force, the National Republican Guards, composed largely of the old forces of public order—Civil Guards and Assault Guards. They demanded that the Anarcho-Syndicalist workers behind the lines surrender their arms, which were needed at the front.

In addition to the government campaign to limit the influence of the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the POUM, there were the activities of the Communists' private political police, known to their opponents as the Cheka. This secret force was held responsible for the disappearance and subsequent assassination of numerous members of the CNT, FAI and POUM.³⁴ Clandestine prisons were declared to be maintained by the Cheka, in which anti-fascists who differed in philosophy from the ruling authorities were held without legal basis. Officials professed ignorance concerning the existence of these institutions or of the prisoners which they harbored; and even the authority of the Minister of Justice, it was reported, was not recognized by their keepers.³⁵

NEW CABINET FOLLOWS BARCELONA REVOLT

By May 1937 political tension had become acute in Catalonia, the center of Anarcho-Syndicalist activities. The authorities at both Valencia and Barcelona had come to resent CNT control of key telephone stations between the two cities, which had resulted in the interception of official messages, and were apparently determined to assert their authority over the Anarcho-Syndicalists. On May 3 a heavily armed police detachment attempted to occupy the Telephone Building in Barcelona and

disarm the workers,³⁶ but the latter resisted the attack.

The clash created city-wide excitement, barricades sprang up on many of the principal streets, and fighting became general. On one side were ranged the CNT, FAI and POUM; on the other, the police and government supporters. Responsible leaders of both factions early endeavored to stop the strife. But the fighting ended only on May 7, both sides laying down their arms, abandoning their barricades and agreeing to release all prisoners. Meanwhile, similar strife had broken out in Tarragona, Gerona and other points in Catalonia. It was estimated that the revolt cost at least 500 lives.³⁷ The Valencia government took advantage of the struggle to strengthen its authority in Catalonia, which had lagged in support of the war, and which for a time had become almost an independent region. On May 6 the Catalan troops were declared part of the regular government army.

But within a week the central government was itself faced with a cabinet crisis. On May 15 Premier Francisco Largo Caballero, who had held office since the preceding September, presented his resignation. Largo later declared³⁸ that he had been forced out because he refused to meet Communist demands for suppression of the POUM. His opponents, however, asserted that he had failed to provide effective leadership in his post as Minister of War, which he had held together with the Premiership. According to one critic, Largo Caballero failed to meet three military problems: reserves had not been built up, no series of offensives had been planned, and the establishment of a central command, coordinating the Aragon with the other fronts, had been delayed.³⁹

Following Largo Caballero's resignation Dr. Juan Negrín, Socialist Finance Minister in the outgoing cabinet, assumed office on May 17. His

33. While all political groups nominally favored a unified command, differences existed as to the degree to which various political factions should control it, and also whether major power should be held by old-line officers or the newer commanders who had come up during the civil war.

34. Cf. Anita Brenner, "Class War in Republican Spain," *Modern Monthly* (New York), September 1937, pp. 9, 18-21; and Rudolf Rocker, *The Tragedy of Spain* (New York, Freie Arbeiter Stimme, 1937), pp. 32, 33. The former source presents translations of articles from *Solidaridad Obrera*, Barcelona organ of the CNT, listing detailed charges.

35. For an account of the unsuccessful efforts of a British M.P. and a French journalist, although armed with an official permit, to penetrate one of these Communist prisons, cf. John McGovern, *Terror in Spain* (London, Independent Labour Party, 1938), and also *La Flèche* (Paris), January 19, 1938. The arrest and imprisonment of another foreigner by the secret agents of the Communist police is detailed in Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit*, cited, pp. 236-57.

36. Like all public enterprises in Catalonia, the building was under the control of a committee, largely made up of CNT members with a few UGT representatives, and headed by a government delegate from the Catalan *Generalitat*.

37. Cf. Lawrence A. Fernsworth, "Revolutionary Forces in Catalonia," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1937, and Brenner, "Class War in Republican Spain," cited, pp. 12-13. For a detailed, day-by-day account of the uprising, written by a leading Anarcho-Syndicalist, cf. Augustin Souchy, *The Tragic Week in May* (Barcelona, Edición de la Oficina de Información Exterior de la CNT y FAI, 1937).

38. In a speech delivered on October 17, 1937 to a vast audience at Madrid. The English translation of what is substantially the complete text is given in *Spanish Labor News* (New York City, Labor Research Front), November 16, 1937.

39. Ralph Bates, "Castilian Drama, II," *New Republic*, October 27, 1937. The Communist indictment against Largo Caballero was phrased most strongly in a speech delivered by Jesús Hernández, Minister of Education and Health, on May 28, 1937. The English translation is given in the *Daily Worker* (New York City), August 9-14, 1937.

ministry was composed of three Socialists, two Communists and four middle-class Republicans, including one leader each from the Catalan *Esquerra* and the Basque Nationalists. The defense ministries were unified in the hands of the moderate Socialist, Indalecio Prieto. Thus the more conservative forces were left in control of the government, with the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Left-wing Socialists outside. The new régime championed a moderate policy on social and economic questions, apparently in the hope of winning British and French support for the Loyalist cause. Neither of the two large trade-union federations—UGT and CNT—was represented in the cabinet. The national committee of the UGT voted on May 28 to back the new régime, but the CNT withheld official support.

The parties in the Negrín cabinet at once initiated a campaign to prosecute the war more energetically and to strengthen themselves against opposition elements. On June 23 a sweeping sedition decree was approved. A few days earlier 40 leaders of the POUM, including Andrés Nin, had been arrested. They were charged with espionage and otherwise acting as the agents of General Franco. Nin was subsequently reported to have been "kidnapped" from a Madrid prison by an armed band and assassinated.⁴⁰ The Right-wing Socialists represented in the cabinet added to their power by gaining the ascendancy in the General Workers' Union (UGT), over the Largo Caballero faction.

This growing preponderance of the conservative elements in the Loyalist government as opposed to their more radical opponents, was accompanied by a shift in the relative strength of the parties within the governing group. During the last six months of 1937 Indalecio Prieto, Right-wing Socialist and Minister of National Defense, gradually became the most powerful figure in the government coalition, while the Communist party lost its former position of predominance. The first indication of change was a Prieto decree of June 27, forbidding party propaganda in the army. The Communists yielded, but threatened more active opposition if a second decree, prohibiting partisan propaganda by army officers among the civilian population, was put into effect.⁴¹ Publication of this second decree was therefore postponed, but it was finally issued on October 4.⁴² On November 18

Alvarez del Vayo, former Foreign Minister and generally regarded as a Communist partisan, was removed as chief of army commissars, and Prieto then proceeded to dismantle the commissar system.

Among other factors weakening the Communists had been a marked diminution in the flow of Soviet supplies.⁴³ The prominence of Russian influence had served to stimulate a feeling of Spanish nationalism within other parties. But the cabinet formed under Premier Negrín on April 4, 1938 witnessed a resurgence of Communist influence, apparently correlative with promises of new Soviet aid. While Communist party posts in the cabinet were reduced from two to one, Jesús Hernández was made head of the revived system of army commissars and Alvarez del Vayo became Foreign Minister. Finally, the party's most prominent opponent, Indalecio Prieto, was ousted from the War Ministry. Prieto had been weakened by the failure of British and French assistance to materialize, the hope of which had been his principal card. In addition, Prieto's reliance on old-line officers, and his sabotage of the commissar system were viewed as partially responsible for government defeats.

Thus the campaign for unity and discipline among the groups supporting the government was partially balked by partisan rivalries, while policies of repression sowed tares of resentment and discontent among the proletarian masses. Underlying the political struggle was a fatal division concerning the relative merits of social revolution or a return to the economic *status quo*. To the Loyalist handicaps of an improvised army and inferiority in foreign aid was thus added impairment of morale, which affected both the striking power of the army at the front and the production of essential supplies behind the lines.

FRANCO STRIVES FOR UNIFIED SUPPORT

On the side of the Insurgents a progressive consolidation of political power paralleled their military advances. On July 24, 1936, a week after the outbreak of the revolt, seven high army officers organized at Burgos a Junta of National Defense.⁴⁴ Ten weeks later, on September 30, this provisional régime placed all governmental authority in the hands of General Francisco Franco who was named "Chief of the Government of the Spanish

40. *New York Times*, August 8, 1937; and also Brenner, "Class War in Republican Spain," cited, pp. 8-16. Communist sources, however, alleged that Nin had been "kidnapped" by his friends, who were described as "a group of Spanish and German armed fascists." *Daily Worker*, September 11, 1937, and *International Press Correspondence*, October 30, 1937.

41. Louis Fischer, "Internal Politics in Spain," *The Nation*, October 30, 1937.

42. The text is given in *La Vanguardia*, October 6, 1937.

43. Soviet trade figures released at Moscow revealed that exports to Spain, which averaged almost 10,000,000 rubles during the first nine months of 1937, had fallen to an average of 1,357,000 rubles for the last three months, *New York Herald Tribune*, March 23, 1938.

44. For a review of the most important acts of the Junta, or secretariat, cf. Thomson, "Spain: Civil War," cited, p. 261.

State" and Commander-in-Chief of all Insurgent forces. Franco thus became dictator and supreme ruler (*Caudillo*) of Nationalist Spain.⁴⁵

The most prominent political forces supporting his administration were: the army, the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx), and the Carlist *Requetés*. To these should be added the Alfonsist monarchists and what remained of the conservative groups formerly organized in the CEDA (*Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*). Theoretically, the army in the past had been non-political; but in practice the higher officers were markedly conservative and monarchist. The *Requetés*, whose strength centered in the northern province of Navarre, were ardent supporters of the Carlist tradition, demanding an authoritarian monarchy closely linked to the church.

The fascist Phalanx, founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator, had been numerically weak before the revolt, and did not elect a single deputy in the elections of February 1936. But it grew rapidly during the civil war, and many of its recruits were probably former Socialists and Syndicalists. It advocated establishment of a corporative state modelled on fascist lines which, while maintaining private property, would curb the power of wealth and the political influence of the church. It represented a new and boisterous force on the Spanish scene; and, as General Franco later declared, the Phalanx brought "youthful masses and propaganda in the new manner" to the Nationalist cause.

Since the 26 points of the Phalangist program were subsequently adopted as the platform of the sole official party, they may well be summarized here.⁴⁶ The Phalanx proclaimed that before "the supreme reality of Spain . . . the interests of individuals, groups and classes must inexorably bow." Spain is a unit, and all regional "separatism is a crime." Its program claims for Spain the "will of Empire . . . a pre-eminent place in Europe . . . the spiritual axis" of Hispanic America. It demands the strengthening of the armed forces, including a commanding navy, so that "a military sense of life may shape all Spanish existence. . . . Our State will be a totalitarian instrument at the service of the integrity of the fatherland." Political parties and parliamentary government are ordered abol-

ished. Economically, Spain is to become "a gigantic syndicate of producers. . . . The national-syndicalist State will permit all private initiative compatible with the collective interest." Both capitalism and Marxism are repudiated. Banking and public utilities are to be nationalized. Agriculture is to be stimulated, and land distributed to establish "family properties." "All males will receive pre-military education, which will prepare them for the honor of joining the national and popular army of Spain. . . . The Church and the State will co-ordinate their respective powers, but no interference or activity will be permitted which might impair the dignity of the State or the integrity of the nation."

Despite the emphasis on unity, friction was inevitable among the disparate elements supporting the Insurgent cause. The *Requetés* were prone to consider dangerously radical the Phalangist program calling for a totalitarian government, land reform and state limitation of the church's power; such measures boded ill for the vested rights of bishops and grandees. On the other hand, the Phalangists regarded the *Requetés* as reactionary fanatics who would return Spain to feudalism, and opposed also the old-line conservative politicians, some of whom had won places in the Franco administration. Both the *Requetés* or Carlists and the Alfonsists—together with the bulk of the army officers—desired re-establishment of the throne; but there was division of opinion as to who the future king should be. The designated "regent" of the Carlists was Prince Xavier de Bourbon-Parma, while the Alfonsists, supposedly supported by General Franco, demanded election of the 23-year-old Infante Juan, Prince of the Asturias, third son of Alfonso XIII.

In addition, resentment among Spanish army officers at the preponderant rôle being played by the Italians came to a head at the end of March 1937, following the Italian defeat at Brihuega. Plots against Franco's rule were reported at Málaga and in Spanish Morocco, and were crushed only after a considerable number of the malcontents had been shot.⁴⁷

On April 19, 1937 General Franco moved to unify the ranks of his supporters by merging the Phalangists and *Requetés* into a single party called the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S.*⁴⁸ At the same time all other parties

45. General Franco had not been a member of the original Junta, which was apparently dominated by General Emilio Mola, commander in the north. Franco's reputation as a military strategist, his control of the most important shock troops—the Moors and Foreign Legion—together with possible German and Italian influence, may have been responsible for his elevation to supreme command.

46. The text, together with an exposition of the 26 points, is given in FE, *Doctrina Nacional-sindicalista* (San Sebastián, Jefatura Nacional de Prensa y Propaganda), March-May 1937.

47. Cf. *New York Times*, and *New York Herald Tribune*, March 30, 31, 1937.

48. J.O.N.S. was made up of the initials of the words, *Juventudes de la Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista*, the phrase national-syndicalism being more akin to Spanish radical tradition than national-socialism. For the text of this decree (Number 255), cf. *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (Burgos), April 20, 1937.

were dissolved, including the Alfonsist *Renovación Española* and the Catholic *Acción Popular*, headed by Gil Robles. The Phalanx' 26 points were adopted as the platform of the new party, but were to be subject to revision and modification in accordance with new needs. The *Requetés* were awarded a less substantial concession in a declaration that the way was not closed to re-establishment of the monarchy.

All members of the Phalanx and of the *Requetés* automatically became members of the party, to which other persons might seek individual admission. The party was to be governed by a National Council and a Political Junta, half of whose members were to be named by the National Council, and half by the chief of state.

Army influence in the official party was strengthened on August 4, 1937, when General Franco proclaimed the statutes of the organization.⁴⁹ All commissioned and non-commissioned officers were automatically declared members. The decree prescribed that the members of the National Council, to number between 25 and 50, should be named by the *Caudillo*.⁵⁰ The statutes also provided for trade-union (syndical) organizations under party control, to regulate labor and the production and distribution of goods.

RIVALRIES THREATEN SINGLE PARTY

The April unification decree had apparently been issued to meet an acute political situation. In November 1936 Primo de Rivera, founder of the Phalanx, was executed by the Loyalists. Subsequently rivalry for control of the organization broke out between Manuel Hedilla, reportedly backed by Franco, and a more extreme and "pro-labor" group headed by Sancho Dávila, cousin of Primo. On the night of April 16, 1937 an armed clash between the two factions occurred at Salamanca. The leaders of the Sancho Dávila group were jailed, and on the 19th the Phalanx was merged with the *Requetés*. Hedilla was seemingly disappointed not to have been made chief of the new party. He sought to challenge Franco's position, but was arrested with some 80 of his friends and followers.⁵¹ The accused were tried by courts-

martial on charges of "conspiracy against the security of the country and state." Hedilla and 14 other leaders received the death sentence, later commuted to imprisonment or exile; 20 more Falangists were sentenced to life imprisonment, and 46 to deportation to Spanish Guinea.⁵² This move curbed the strength of the Phalanx as a "radical" force, and increased the ascendancy of the army and more conservative elements.

Nevertheless, active rivalry between the Phalanx and the *Requetés* continued. In January 1938 the strength of the former was estimated at almost 3,000,000, that of the latter at some 800,000. Distinct flags, anthems and uniforms were still in use, the *Requetés* wearing khaki shirts and bright red berets, and the *Falangistas* navy blue caps with crimson tassels. Three months earlier street fighting between the two factions had been reported in Saragossa and San Sebastian. The 10,000 Germans in Spain, who had found places in almost every administrative department, were declared to be closely linked in sympathy to the fascists, and had encouraged the latter to augment their strength through control of the bureaucracy.⁵³

On January 30, 1938 Franco took a further step toward setting up a formal government. For the technical Junta established in the fall of 1936 he substituted, by decree, a cabinet of twelve portfolios.⁵⁴ General Franco retained supreme control as president of the cabinet and commander of the armed forces. The remaining seats in the government were distributed among three generals and eight civilians. General Martínez Anido, known under the Monarchy for his aggressive tactics against labor in Catalonia, became Minister of Public Order. The important political post of Minister of the Interior was assigned to Franco's brother-in-law, Ramón Serrano Suñer. Both groups of monarchists—the Alfonsists and the Carlists⁵⁵—as well as the Phalanx, were represented in the cabinet, but General Queipo de Llano of Seville was passed over. Although he had won a wide following through nightly broadcasts, the discontinuance of his famous radio talks was announced on February 2.

52. *New York Times*, May 14, 29, June 17, 1937; and Leigh White, "Rebellion in Rebel Spain," *The Nation*, December 11, 1937. Some resentment had also been reported in the Phalanx against the Italian troops, and also at the growing influence of Franco's family, especially his brother Nicolás, who had become an important political figure.

53. *The Times*, January 14, 1938.

54. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, January 31, 1938. The manifesto of the new government, together with biographical notes on the cabinet ministers, is given in *Spain* (New York), March 15, 1938.

55. On January 26 General Franco expelled from the country the Carlist pretender, Prince Xavier de Bourbon-Parma, for engaging in political activities. *New York Herald Tribune*, January 27, 1938.

49. Decree Number 333, *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, August 7, 1937.

50. Franco named 50 members of the National Council by Decree 385 of October 19. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, October 21, 1937.

51. Cf. Luis Pagés Guix, *La Traición de los Franco. ¡Arriba España!* (Madrid, Imprenta de Sánchez, Ferraz 71); and Cardozo, *The March of a Nation*, cited, pp. 308, 309. Hedilla was removed from membership in the Political Junta of the new party on May 11. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, May 13, 1937.

CONCLUSION

The consistent ability to take and maintain the offensive, shown by General Franco's forces throughout the Spanish war, now promises them ultimate victory. The Republican government, despite numerical superiority in man power and definite progress toward creation of a disciplined army, has been unable to overcome Franco's supremacy in trained troops and experienced officers, nor to match—except for a time in the skies over Madrid—his strength in airplanes and artillery coming from Italy and Germany. While the Spanish struggle has indicated that, with the growing complexity of warfare, defense has an increasing advantage over offense, it has also demonstrated that such an advantage can be eclipsed by an army capable of sustained manoeuvre and composed of highly trained troops under able officers. Offensive troops, moreover, need to be backed by immense artillery fire-power and decisive air superiority, and must be sufficiently mobile to maintain a continuing attack. New light has been thrown by the conflict on the most effective use of military aviation. Combat planes and bombers have become almost indispensable aids for infantry advance. But bombers have largely failed in efforts to cut roads and railroads, and their "terroristic" use in large-scale raids on the civilian population has apparently served to stiffen rather than to break down morale behind the lines.⁵⁶

In both camps the progress of the conflict has been attended by a shift in the political balance to the Right, in part an apparent result of British influence. Within Nationalist Spain the influence of "extremist" *Falangistas* was curbed. Among the Loyalists, the more conservative elements—Republicans, Right-wing socialists and Communists—have undermined the position of Anarcho-Syndicalists, Left-wing Socialists and the POUM. Both sides have witnessed a resurgence of nationalist sentiment, directed on the one hand against Italian and on the other against Soviet influence. Within the two factions there has also been a trend toward restoration of the old bureaucracy, as well as the police and politicians of pre-civil-war days. Had a stalemate resulted in the field, these elements might have cast their weight toward political compromise and a negotiated peace.

While the Communists have played a major

56. On the military lessons of the Spanish conflict, cf. Emilio Canevari, "Forecasts from the War in Spain," *Army Ordnance* (Washington), March-April 1938; and Thomas R. Phillips, "Preview of Armageddon," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 12, 1938. *Le Temps* (Paris) of March 6, 1938 published an article reviewing the rôle of aviation in the Spanish war.

rôle in the government coalition, the Republican régime has not been "communistic" in the sense of the loose charges often directed against it. The Spanish Communists, their prestige enhanced by Soviet aid, have exercised a decisive influence, whose importance, however, has varied from time to time. But in the social and economic field, they have been "reformist" and anti-revolutionary rather than revolutionary, and their influence has been consistently cast on the conservative side. In general, recent tendencies within Republican Spain have pointed toward abandonment of social revolution and a return to modified bourgeois capitalism.

Nor is Nationalist Spain as thoroughly fascist as it is sometimes pictured. An Insurgent victory is expected to result in the imposition of some sort of authoritarian state. But it is not yet clear whether it will be headed by a monarch or by General Franco. To date, political life on the Insurgent side has been much more effectively regimented than economic activities. In any case, the army officers are likely to prove the dominant factor for some time in the new state. But in the long run they will have to make terms with their old-time allies—landowners, clergy and monarchists—and to an important degree with the new force of the fascist Phalanx, whose dynamic growth has been one of the most significant developments of the civil war.

Complete triumph for Franco may strengthen reactionary and intransigent tendencies, and encourage policies of repression rather than conciliation. Thus political bitterness may be even further intensified. The new régime will face a herculean task. Its heritage from the war will be debt and destruction. Spain has long been a poor country, whose chief wealth is agriculture; it can achieve national greatness only by social peace. To raise its masses from the poverty level, it must increase agricultural production, which almost inevitably involves some measure of agrarian reform. This is only one of various fundamental problems which bear the seeds of future strife. Nor will the newly stimulated regional sentiment of Catalonia and the Basque provinces be easily crushed, even by programs of enforced centralization. Should the Nationalists prove unable to free the country promptly of the presence of foreign troops, their political difficulties will be markedly increased. In any case, Franco's authoritarian state will be confronted with a far more severe test of its claims to disciplined unity and constructive advance than that faced by Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy.